Group Presentations

Picture this: You’re standing in front of a full class, ready to give a presentation with three other people. As you begin speaking, you realize that another group member has pulled up the wrong portion of your PowerPoint presentation. After you’ve finished, you listen to the next speaker and realize that her points have nothing to do with what you just said. By the time the other two members speak, the audience is so confused that you’re facing a sea of blank faces.

While this is exaggerated, there are some things to keep in mind when presenting with a group. Here are some basic tips to keep your presentation running smoothly and prevent those blank stares.

**Working as a Group**

- Decide on group roles early in the process. It helps to have one person who keeps notes and checks in with other members to keep them on task. If you have someone who is good with technology, you might want to assign the visuals aids to them. Your strongest writers might be most effective in getting the presentation outline together.

- Encourage group participation in preparing the presentation by asking individual members to contribute and setting a positive atmosphere.

- Set a group goal that includes a strategy, the purpose of the group, and the resources needed to fulfill the goal.

- Develop a group presentation outline that everyone can agree on and that clearly states what will be covered.

**Preparing the Presentation**

- Determine what each member will do during the presentation. Assign one person to run the visual aid until she speaks. Choose the most confident and energetic speaker to open and close the presentation. Decide how you will split up the body of the speech.

- Analyze the audience and come to a group consensus of what the audience needs to hear.

- If you are presenting a paper, make sure you look at the “Presenting a Paper” handout for tips on the transformation from written to oral.

- If introductions are necessary, decide whether each member will introduce themselves at the beginning of the presentation or immediately before they speak.
· Decide how each section will fit together. Practice introductions and transitions when moving from group member to group member to make the presentation flow smoothly.

· Decide what will happen when each member is finished speaking. Will she sit or stand? This may sound basic, but determining this ahead of time will prevent awkward moments.

· Rehearse the speech many times (both as a group and individually) to work out any bugs beforehand. Make sure that you time your rehearsals so that you have a good idea of the length of the presentation. Come to the Speaking Center as a group.

· Use discrete hand signals to indicate when a speaker is speaking too quickly or slowly, too quietly or too loudly. Time the speech and let others know how much time they have left.

· Create a consistent presentation. As a group, try and dress in a similar manner. Whether you decide on dressing formally or casually, make sure that you come to some agreement. The same can be said with the presentation—establish a visual aid that flows from one section to the other in similar font and color. Have all group members use similar language or terminology.

Group presentations can be challenging because of the effort that it takes to coordinate all of the members and the different sections of the presentation. Make sure that you give yourself plenty of time to work on the presentation. Use these tips and come to the Speaking Center for a polished and effective group presentation.